

Message Text

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70

ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PA-02 OC-05

CCO-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 H-02 INR-07 IO-10 L-02 NSC-05

SP-02 PRS-01 RSC-01 SS-15 USSS-00 SY-04 FAA-00 WRD-01

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S/CCT: JGATCH

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, TS

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SUBJECT: VC-10 HIJACKING

REF: STATE 259650

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RE HIJACKING
AT MONDAY BRIEFING. FIRST QUESTION CONCERNS FATE OF
TERRORISTS.

Q: ARE YOU SURE THAT THEY ARE FREE? THERE ARE SOME
REPORTS THAT THEY WERE ARRESTED BY THE TUNISIANS.

A: WELL AT THIS POINT I BELIEVE THEY ARE IN TUNISIAN
CUSTODY, BUT THAT IS THE EXTENT OF MY INFORMATION AT THIS
TIME.

Q: WELL AREN'T THEY IN TUNISIAN CUSTODY, PENDING
ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOME HAVEN FOR THEM IN SOME OTHER SYMPATHE-
TIC STATE? DO YOU KNOW?

A: I AM NOT SURE EXACTLY WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THAT RESPECT.
I WOULD POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE PAST IN SITUATIONS

OF THIS KIND, WE HAVE ALWAYS URGED ALL COUNTRIES TO
BRING THESE CRIMINALS TO JUSTICE.

Q: HAS THIS MESSAGE BEEN GIVEN TO THE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT?
PARTICULARLY THE LAST PART OF IT -- THE FACT THAT YOU
DEPLORE ANY ACTION ON THE PART OF ANY GOVERNMENT TO
GIVE ASYLUM TO THESE --

A: I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT IS AWARE
OF OUR POSITION.

Q: BEFORE THIS?

A: WELL, I AM JUST CONFIDENT THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF OUR
POSITION. BUT I CAN'T SAY PRECISELY IF ANY MESSAGES,
PER SE, HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED IN THIS REGARD.

Q: YOU CAN'T SAY BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW -- OR ARE YOU
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LEAVING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY?

A: WELL, WE HAVE, YOU KNOW, BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE
GOVERNMENTS DIRECTLY CONCERNED, THROUGHOUT THE INCIDENT.
THAT'S WHY I AM CONFIDENT THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF OUR
POSITION.

Q: DID THE UNITED STATES SPECIFICALLY ASK THE EGYPTIAN

GOVERNMENT NOT TO RELEASE THE KHARTOUM PEOPLE?

A: ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN AWARE OF OUR POSITION ON THE KHARTOUM EIGHT FOR A LONG TIME, AND WE HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY ASSURED THAT THOSE CRIMINALS REMAIN IN CUSTODY IN CAIRO.

Q: AND WOULD THEY REMAIN IN CUSTODY?

A: THAT THEY REMAIN IN CUSTODY IN CAIRO.

Q: HAVE WE MADE THE WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY IN QUESTIONS OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, A MEASURE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH SOME OF THESE MIDDLE EAST GOVERNMENTS OR ALL OF THEM WITH WHICH WE HAVE RELATIONS? OR, TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY: ARE WE GETTING ANY DEGREE OF COOPERATION? YOU MENTIONED THAT THE KHARTOUM EIGHT ARE STILL IN THE CLINK IN CAIRO, AS FAR AS WE KNOW.

A: YES

Q: BUT ARE WE GETTING OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION IN ANY DEGREE FROM THESE GOVERNMENTS WITH WHICH WE HAVE RECENTLY TAKEN UP RELATIONS, OR EXPANDED RELATIONS, IN THE MATTER OF --

A: COUNTERTERRORISM?

Q: YES. JUST, GENERALLY.

A: I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THAT QUESTION, BECAUSE I REALLY UNCLASSIFIED

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DON'T KNOW THE FACTS ABOVE AND BEYOND THIS PARTICULAR INCIDENT WHICH WE, OF COURSE, WERE IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNMENTS THAT WERE CONCERNED -- ALTHOUGH WE WERE NOT A DIRECT PARTY TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. INGERSOLL

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